From: Michael Birger
To: City Council
Subject: Please vote against the proposal to divest from Hewlett-Packard
Date: Wednesday, April 25, 2018 9:40:24 AM

Cambridge City council,

Hello,

The expected proposal to divest from Hewlett-Packard is part of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) anti-Israel movement.

While some of the BDS groups falsely include the word "Peace" in their name, the boycott against Israel threatens the peace process by promoting extortion rather than negotiation, and discourages Palestinians from agreeing to any reasonable peace offer.

The boycott immorally puts the entire blame for the conflict on the Israelis ignoring the fact that Israel has agreed to a proposal negotiated by the United States to hand over 97% of the disputed land in exchange for peace, an offer which the Palestinians have rejected.

The BDS movement is trying to destroy Israel as a Jewish state, not to promote a peaceful solution. This is evident by statements of BDS leaders themselves.

The BDS movement singles Israel out and holds it to different sets of standards than all other countries. BDS immorally spreads lies and false anti-Israel propaganda, most notably it defames Israel by falsely labeling it an "apartheid" which it is not. Apartheid is a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination. In contrast, Israel guarantees complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex. 20% of Israel's population are Arab citizens who enjoy equal rights and no segregation between Jews, Arabs, Muslims and Christians. Israeli Arabs are members of Parliament, Government ministers, Supreme Court judges, etc.

BDS members have been convicted of hate speech including Holocaust denial and of racially aggravated hate crimes.

BDS has links to prescribed terrorist organizations such as Hamas and the PFLP. Hamas has publicly supported the BDS movement. BDS has been linked to fundraising for Hamas. Signatories to 2005 founding BDS document include front organizations for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a banned terrorist group in the US.

BDS groups have also supported convicted terrorist Rasmea Odeh who murdered American students in Jerusalem in 1969. Odeh was recently deported from the United Stated due to her terrorist conviction.

The proposed Divestment proposal is totally unjustified and based on falsehoods. It is part of a larger movement which aims to destroy the Jewish State of Israel, has strong links to

proscribed terrorist organizations and engages in violence and racist hate speech.

I am confident that you will continue to stand by American values and together we will stand for freedom and tolerance, innovation and business growth, connecting people with opportunities and rejecting antisemitism. I strongly encourage you to vote against the discriminatory divestment proposal.

Best Regards,

Supporting evidence

1. Dozens of statements by BDS leaders indicate that the real goal of the BDS movement is the destruction of the Jewish State of Israel.

For instance, Omar Barghouti, the founder of the BDS movement has said "most definitely we oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine.". Video footage of his speech can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYvpsGd8K4Y

David Letwin, a prominent pro-BDS author wrote:

“Zionists complain [BDS] demands spell the end of the 'Jewish state.' They are correct”

Source: https://socialistworker.org/2014/06/09/real-basis-for-a-peace-process

2. Several BDS groups supports a convicted terrorist - Rasmea Odeh - who murdered 2 American students in a supermarket bombing. Source: https://c2.legalinsurrection.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Northwestern-SJP-Event-When-You-Come-for-Rasmea.jpg

3. HAMAS, an organization classified by the United States, Canada, the European Union, Egypt, Israel, Australia and Japan as a terrorist organization, has praised BDS on its official twitter account on July 5, 2017. Source: https://twitter.com/hamasinfoen/status/882627719829303296?lang=en

4. The US Congress has heard testimony on BDS fundraising for HAMAS terrorist group:

http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20160419/104817/HHRG-114-FA18-Wstate-SchanzerJ-20160419.pdf

5. Several European countries have closed BDS bank accounts in major German, Austrian, Spanish and Irish banks. The accounts were closed due to BDS links to terrorist groups (Hamas, Islamic Jihad etc).

https://www.rte.ie/news/2016/1002/820919-ireland-palestine-banking/

http://www.thetower.org/5994-for-second-time-in-a-month-paypal-shuts-account-of-french-anti-israel-boycotters/

https://www.algemeiner.com/2016/05/19/french-bank-closes-account-of-bds-group/
6. BDS activists have been engaged in antisemitic hate speech. BDS activists in France have

been convicted of Holocaust denial in France in 2016: http://www.savemysweden.com/bds-activists-in-france-convicted-of-holocaust-denial/

7. BDS activists have been engaged in criminal violent intimidation and hounding of Jewish and Israeli owned businesses. In the UK on July 18, 2017 BDS activists were convicted of aggravated trespass and of failing to follow police orders and on September 30, 2017 - the leader of the BDS Campaign was found guilty of racial aggravated hate crime. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/30/jeremy-corbyn-backed-groups-activists-hounded-jewish-business/ and http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/two-scottish-palestine-activists-convicted-over-israeli-store-protest/

Michael Birger
michaelbirger@gmail.com

Richmond Hill, New York 11418